Journal 3

We teach three hours of ancient civilizations which is an eighth grade class. One thing I learned about the development of students at this age is that they actually behave like young adults more than I thought they would. These students are quite intelligent, very creative, and quite respectful. Being that we’re new to the classroom and they think it is kind of cool that we’re college students, the students may be acting so wonderfully simply because we’re there. However, Ms. Kennedy did tell us that most of her classes are pretty well behaved and even she was surprised by how much effort these classes put into her previous unit project.

To involve students in class we had a quiz at the end of the lesson and asked them questions intermittingly throughout the lesson. Part of keeping students involved in the lesson is helping them relate what they are learning to their lives outside of the classroom. We did this while talking about agricultural practices of the ancient Egyptians. Having the students compare the strategies of the Egyptians to other cultures, including their own helped them relate to the lesson and see just how important agriculture is to the development of a society.

The teaching strategy we used for this lesson was The New American Lecture. We find this strategy to be most compatible with our teaching styles and the age group that we’re teaching. The attention span of middle school age students is not very long and the fact that The New American Lecture involves having breaks in instruction helps students stay more focused. I would modify this next time by using more activities and having our comprehension questions concrete and planned out before we begin instruction.

In terms of assessing our students we had some summative assessments throughout the lesson and a formative assessment at the end of the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson we asked them what they already knew about the Nile River which allowed us to gauge the knowledge they already had and then try to build upon that. Throughout the lesson we would ask them questions to make sure that they understood our instruction and then at the end of the lesson we had a quiz so that we could assess whether or not they retained the information and understood it.

As far as classroom management, we didn’t really have to do much other than reminding the students to refocus themselves after we would ask them a question. Most of the students were very quiet and attentive throughout the lesson. Some students were having side conversations in the fourth hour so I went and stood by them so they knew that I knew they were talking and would like them to pay attention. They didn’t really stop talking right away so I had to quietly ask them to please pay attention to Mr. Mulrooney and the rest of the lesson. Other than this particular situation the students were all very respectful and we didn’t really have to rehash over any rules or procedures. I don’t think anything would need to be modified in the future because we have such well behaved students.